

Talk to your manager about a learning goal in your next 1-on-1

Why do it?



It's one thing to know where you want to go in your career, but quite another to make time for your professional development during the whirlwind of your workweek. Initiating a conversation with your manager is a good way to set and be accountable for learning goals. It shows your desire to grow and gives your manager an opportunity to share resources and advice so you keep making progress on your long-term career goals.

How to do it:

1. Decide what you want to learn next — and how it ties into your overall professional growth.

Some people have a very clear idea of what they want to learn — a technical skill to stay on top of an emerging technology or a facet of leadership to develop in order to move into management. Others don't, and that's fine, too: Your learning goal can be exploratory to help you determine a long-term plan.

2. Add the conversation about your goal to your next 1-on-1 agenda.

To help your manager understand what's driving the agenda item, explain your thinking. For example:

“We’ve been so busy lately that I haven’t had time to focus on my professional development. I would like to work on my negotiation skills, which could improve my current customer calls and help me grow in my career. I’d like to discuss some ideas I have for how I can work this goal into my schedule.”

3. Share your ideas for how to reach your goal, and seek input from your manager.

Do you want to take a class? Or arrange meetings with a few of your company's top salespeople? Whatever your initial plan is for reaching your goal, ask for input from your manager. Maybe they know of a great book to read or are willing to connect you with an expert inside or outside of your organization. Once you've talked through the goal and your path to reach it with your boss, write out [an action plan](#) to meet it, including specific milestones and deadlines.

4. Follow up with your manager on progress you're making toward your goal.

In future 1-on-1s, let your manager know how things are going. How do you feel you've improved? What roadblocks have you encountered? Updating your manager keeps you accountable for making progress and gives your boss the chance to continue offering support and guidance.